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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
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USIA-06 SY-05 MCT-01 /067 W

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P R 192127Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1421  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, AR  
SUBJECT: DISAPPEARANCE OF ARGENTINA'S AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA;  
BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE GOVERNOR'S SON ALSO REPORTED MISSING

1. BUENOS AIRES NEWSPAPERS NOTED TODAY JULY 19 APPARENT  
DISAPPEARANCE OF ARGENTINA'S AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA HECTOR  
HIDALGO SOLA. HIDALGO SOLA ARRIVED SEVERAL DAYS AGO FROM  
HIS POST TO ATTEND THE MARRIAGE OF HIS DAUGHTER WHICH WILL  
TAKE PLACE JULY 22.

2. ACCORDING TO ONE OF HIDALGO SOLA'S FRIENDS THE  
AMBASSADOR LEFT HIS APARTMENT YESTERDAY JULY 18 AT 8:30  
IN THE MORNING WITHOUT ANY FEAR OR PREOCCUPATION. HE WAS  
SEEN PARKED ON A MAIN AVENUE LEADING TO HIS OFFICE BY ONE  
ACQUAINTANCE. HIDALGO SOLA WAS AT THAT TIME TALKING WITH  
ONE OR MORE PERSONS WHO HAD PARKED THEIR FORD FALCON JUST  
BEHIND HIS CAR. HIS FAMILY PROFESSES NO KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT  
MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO THE AMBASSADOR. THIS AFTERNOON'S  
PRESS REPORTS THAT OCCUPANTS OF THE OTHER CAR WERE  
"HEAVILY ARMED."

3. HIDALGO SOLA IS A LONG TIME MEMBER OF THE RADICAL PARTY WHO  
CALLED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO HIMSELF JUST BEFORE LEAVING HIS  
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POST THIS TIME BY MAKING SEVERAL PRONOUNCEMENTS CONCERNING  
ARGENTINA'S INTERNAL POLITICS. AMONG HIDALGO SOLA'S SEVERAL  
SPECULATIONS WAS ONE WHICH FORESAW A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE  
"MUCH SOONER THAN ANYONE MIGHT EXPECT". DURING HIS BRIEF STAY

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IN BUENOS AIRES BEFORE HIS DISAPPEARANCE HIDALGO SOLA WAS AN OUTSPOKEN FIGURE ON THE DIPLOMATIC/POLITICAL CIRCUIT. AS THOUGH THIS MIGHT BE INSUFFICIENT FOR GAINING HIM ENEMIES, HIDALGO SOLA IS REMEMBERED FOR HAVING RECEIVED DEPOSED ARGENTINE TRADE UNION LEADER CASILDO HERRERAS LAST YEAR AT HIS EMBASSY IN CARACAS. HERRERAS, WHO IS IN EXILE ABROAD, IS ANATHEMA TO HARDLINING MILITARY ELEMENTS. IT IS ALSO CONSIDERED RELEVANT IN LOCAL POLITICAL CIRCLES THAT HARDLINE MILITARY ELEMENTS STRONGLY OPPOSED PRESIDENT VIDELA'S RECENT OFFICIAL VISIT TO VENEZUELA BECAUSE THEY SAW IT AS PART OF MOVE TOWARDS A POLITICAL OPENING IN ARGENTINA. A KNOWLEDGEABLE AND WELL PLACED SOURCE WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT I CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL SUAREZ MASON MIGHT BE BEHIND THE AMBASSADOR'S DISAPPEARANCE SINCE THERE IS A LONGSTANDING PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO. HOWEVER, OUR SOURCE COULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ACTION BY UNCONTROLLED SUBORDINATE ELEMENTS IN THE SECURITY FORCES.

5. IN A SEPARATE AND PERHAPS COMPLETELY UNRELATED INCIDENT, WE HAVE HEARD ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT ONE SON OF BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE GOVERNOR ST. JEAN DISAPPEARED FROM HIS HOME JULY 17 AND HAS NOT SUBSEQUENTLY REAPPEARED.  
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